



Solicitation for the Small Business Resiliency Network

History

Economic recessions adversely impact Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and/or Ally (LGBTQIA+) communities and their small businesses more intensely and often last longer than mainstream populations. The lasting negative economic impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has been no exception. In early 2020, the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) initiated a Small Business Resiliency Network (SBRN or the Network) in an effort to reach marginalized communities with timely small business and nonprofit information and improve access to culturally relevant technical assistance.

The Network is currently comprised of approximately 30 organizations that serve historically disadvantaged small businesses, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits across Washington state. Network members are distinctive from mainstream economic development organizations in that they are trusted messengers within the communities they serve and provide highly specialized culturally relevant business assistance. The collective outreach and technical assistance provided by Network members enables Commerce to improve reach and support in historically marginalized communities.

Need and Opportunity

The Washington State Legislature has identified state funding to help Commerce sustain and expand the Small Business Resiliency Network. Commerce is seeking organizations with small business and nonprofit competence in racially, ethnically or otherwise diverse communities who historically have had limited access to and have been underserved by mainstream resources. Commerce is looking for outreach and technical assistance service to be provided throughout Washington state by organizations that are considered trusted messengers within the communities they serve.

Commerce will evaluate applications from eligible organizations on a variety of criteria including but not limited to the communities served, geographic regions and level of service already provided by current members. Based on a combination of available funding, identified need and scoring methodology, Commerce intends to modestly expand the SBRN in early calendar year 2022. Organizations that are not accepted at this time but meet eligibility requirements will be added to a roster to be considered if/when additional funding becomes available.

Contract funding amounts and specific scope of work will be negotiated with accepted organizations. Commerce fully recognizes that the need is great, but current funding is limited. Accepted organizations will receive a partial year contract, for the state fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, in a range between \$20,000 and \$60,000. The amount of funding awarded to a specific organization will be based on a variety of factors including reach, number of businesses served, staff time dedicated to the work and the depth and breadth of services provided. An option to renew contracts for an additional year (July 2022

through June 2023) will be extended to contractors in good standing. Funding for the additional year has yet to be determined, but is anticipated to be annualized and take prior performance into consideration.

Eligibility Criteria

- ☐ Recognized as a trusted community messenger organization representing and serving historically marginalized and underserved communities.
- ☐ Recognized/registered in the state of Washington as a nonprofit organization.
- ☐ Physically located with services provided in Washington state.
- ☐ Licensed to do business in Washington state as of the contract start date.
- ☐ Organization's Board of Directors, executive leadership and staff are at least 51% representative of the community(ies) served.
- ☐ Demonstrated organizational capacity to serve as a contractor providing services and assistance to the community.

Instructions on how to apply

Organizations interested in being considered for membership in the Network should do the following:

- ✓ Determine if the organization meets all eligibility criteria.
- ✓ Determine if the Scope of Work aligns well with the organization's capabilities.
- ✓ Attend or view an Information/Listening Session or schedule time to talk (phone or email) directly with the SBRN Director.
- ✓ If both the eligibility criteria and Scope of Work are a good fit for the organization, complete and submit a Membership Application – Organization Information form here <https://bit.ly/32KvDaX>.

Estimated Schedule of Activities

(Commerce reserves the right to revise)

Issue Solicitation	December 1, 2021
Daytime Information/Listening Session (to be recorded) Register in advance for this meeting at https://bit.ly/3php5bt ~After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting	December 8, 2021 10:00 – 11:00 am PST
Evening Information/Listening Session (to be recorded) Register in advance for this meeting at https://bit.ly/3d5231M ~After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting	December 15, 2021 6:00 – 7:00 pm PST
Schedule 1:1 phone call at https://bit.ly/3lgXtlG or email directly with SBRN Director at SBRN@commerce.wa.gov	As needed/scheduled
Membership Application – Organization Information forms due. Application form located at https://bit.ly/32KvDaX	January 7, 2022 5:00 pm PST
Commerce will review the Membership Application – Organization Information forms for eligibility and consult with current SBRN members.	January 10–14, 2022

Eligible organizations will be notified and invited to complete and submit a Membership Application – Scope of Work form	January 17, 2022
Membership Application – Scope of Work forms due	January 28, 2022 5:00 pm PST
Evaluation/Scoring of Membership Application – Scope of Work forms	January 31–February 4, 2022
Organizations that submitted Membership Application – Scope of Work forms will be informed of status	February 8, 2022
Debrief conferences held as requested for those organizations not selected	February 9–11, 2022
Negotiate contract	February 8–18, 2022
Begin contract work	February—Early March 2022

Scope of Work

As a member of the Small Business Resiliency Network (SBRN), the Contractor shall offer and provide assistance and other business support services at no cost to entrepreneurs, small businesses and nonprofits – with an emphasis on those owned by historically marginalized and underserved persons – in a way that meets or exceeds the goals below.

Commerce will provide a Scope of Work Template for the organization to provide its specific plan for how to provide services as outlined below. The Scope of Work must include a brief description of how each deliverable will be achieved. If your organization is unable to provide a specific deliverable, please consider contacting the SBRN Director to discuss options. Commerce will support SBRN members throughout the contract period and understand that full implementation of all contract deliverables may take the entire contract period.

Terminology and definitions

- All tasks listed in black are the MINIMUM required tasks. How they are implemented will be unique to the community served.
- Tasks listed in green are services that go above and beyond the minimum tasks that are encouraged.
- SBRN member organizations are required to provide a minimum (0.5 FTE or 20 hours/week) staffing effort dedicated to SBRN work. Providing more than 0.5 FTE is an option. These staffing hours can be made up by one or more paid staff working on SBRN work and can also include paid contractors/subcontractors, consultants, etc.

Business Assistance Services

The goal is to attract small business owners and provide ongoing culturally relevant assistance to meet their needs, establish/maintain a trusted community presence and consistently connect with business owners to provide assistance.

Ongoing tasks required of the Contractor:

1. Contractor shall conduct small business needs assessments on all new clients using a culturally appropriate intake, assessment and technical assistance tool.
2. Contractor shall provide staffing and availability to provide individual technical assistance for small business funding applications and other needs (in-person, phone, email, online meeting platforms) with verbal interpretation services for clients as needed, following all health and safety guidelines and rules.
3. Contractor shall ensure clients receive follow-up at least one time to verify if needs were met.
4. Contractor shall provide the necessary guidance and support “direct hand-to-hand” referrals to other SBRN members or other relevant community providers for services Contractor organization is unable to provide.
5. Contractor shall provide group setting small business webinars (online or in-person) to share current information and understand needs.
6. Contractor shall mentor and educate on business planning/strategy services including, but not limited to:
 - Identifying funding (grants, loans, capital)
 - Insurance/bonding
 - Product Development
 - Technology
 - Business planning (goal setting, growth strategy, marketing, staffing)
 - Business management
 - Marketing
 - Education/skill development/leadership
 - Exit strategy/succession planning
 - Financial consultation/budgeting/tax strategy

Communication Materials

The goal is to create and maintain up-to-date information, content and materials and use content and materials to publicize the specific small business resiliency assistance services the Contractor provides as part of the SBRN.

Ongoing tasks required of the Contractor:

1. Contractor shall develop/create educational and relevant small business resiliency content and materials using culturally appropriate terminology and literacy.
2. Contractor shall tailor existing small business resiliency program information to be culturally appropriate.
3. Contractor shall establish an online presence that includes a small business website/page that includes appropriate links to other resources (for example, Commerce webpage, COVID information, funding opportunities, etc.).
4. Contractor shall translate SBRN materials. List the primary languages your clients speak and the languages your materials will be translated into.

Outreach

The goal is to strategically distribute SBRN communication, content and materials to regularly reach small business owners in the Contractor’s defined community(ies) and let small businesses know that business assistance and support programs are available from the Contractor through widespread outreach to the community-at-large.

Ongoing tasks required of the Contractor:

1. Contractor shall use the most effective variety of communication methods in the Contractor's community, including but not limited to print, radio, and digital media to consistently (monthly) promote awareness of the Contractor's services.
2. Contractor shall conduct consistent (monthly) outreach in specific geographical areas to distribute relevant small business resiliency information.
3. Contractor shall establish a system that encourages and facilitates clients to recommend Contractor organization to other local small businesses in the community.
4. Other: List additional methods of outreach your organization will use to distribute SBRN communication, content and materials; include the frequency of pushing out the materials and who will be reached

Network Collaboration

The goal is to partner with Commerce as a collective group of community-based organizations to directly support small businesses owned by historically marginalized and underserved persons.

Ongoing tasks required of the Contractor:

1. Contractor shall ensure at least one organization representative participate in all SBRN calls and online meetings (approximately 12 meetings per year).
2. Contractor shall ensure at least one organization representative participate in individual quarterly meetings with Commerce SBRN Director/staff.
3. Contractor shall ensure at least one organization representative participate in formal training and networking events.
4. Contractor shall provide assistance to other SBRN partners.
5. Contractor shall offer training, tools, mentoring, translation and/or other services to SBRN partners and/or their small business clients.
6. Other: Please note

Metrics and Deliverables

The goal is to document monthly progress of the accomplishments by the Contractor in a way that tells the story of the collective SBRN impacts and efforts. Invoices must have accompanying monthly progress reports to be processed for payment.

The Contractor shall report the following metrics by the fifteenth (15th) of each month following the provision of services, in the progress reporting tool provided by Commerce:

1. Total staff hours implementing SBRN scope of work.
2. Number of small business resiliency materials developed.
3. Estimated number of small businesses reached via outreach efforts.
4. Number of small businesses provided direct technical assistance.
5. Demographics (in aggregate count) of small businesses provided technical assistance.
6. Number of referrals to the SBRN and externally to other subject matter experts.
7. At least one (1) quote and small business success story per month.
8. Other: If your organization provides additional services in Goals #1-4, include how you propose to track and report those additional services in the text box below

Evaluation of Membership Application – Scope of Work

Membership Application – Scope of Work forms will be scored and evaluated using the following weighting:

- Provide Business Assistance Services (Scored 40%)
- Create Communication Materials (Scored 10%)
- Perform Outreach Efforts (Scored 25%)
- Network Collaboration (Scored 10%)
- Report on Metrics and Deliverables (Not scored)
- Estimated Staffing Capacity (Scored 15%)

COMMERCE reserves the right to award a contract to the organization or organizations whose application is deemed to be in the best interest of COMMERCE and the state of Washington at this time. COMMERCE also reserves the right to not award a contract if applications received are not in the best interest of COMMERCE and the state of Washington at this time.

Contact information

If you have any questions about the Network, the solicitation or the work being requested, contact Jessica Camacho, SBRN Director, at SBRN@commerce.wa.gov or 360-742-4187.